



Alabama DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY
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PRESS RELEASE

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**ARCHIVES TO HOLD HISTORY/NOW: CONVERSATIONS ON THE PAST + PRESENT PROGRAM
MAY 23 AT 6:00 PM - RECKONING WITH SHARED PASTS**

Montgomery, AL (05/17/22) – The Alabama Department of Archives and History's series **history/now** returns on **Monday, May 23, at 6:00 p.m. CT.** Ann Banks and Karen Orozco Gutierrez will present "Reckoning with Shared Pasts," a discussion moderated by WSFA-TV's Valorie Lawson. The program will be held in person in the Joseph M. Farley Alabama Power Auditorium.

In 2018, Ann Banks' and Karen Orozco Gutierrez's lives crossed paths as they each researched their families' pasts. Banks is a descendant of Albert James Pickett, a wealthy planter, enslaver, and Alabama's first historian. Gutierrez is the great-granddaughter of Milton Howard, a man enslaved by Pickett. The two women discovered their connection and began a correspondence through an online genealogy forum.

After several months, the two women traveled to Alabama to tackle their families' shared history together. They visited the site of Pickett's plantation in Autauga County where their ancestors both lived and worked, and they searched Pickett's papers at the Montgomery County Archives to learn more about their families.

During this program, Banks and Gutierrez will discuss what they discovered about their families and each other as they confronted their shared connection through slavery.

Ann Banks writes about her ancestors on the website Confederatesinmycloset.com. She is a member of Coming to the Table, a racial justice organization that brings together descendants of enslavers and descendants of the enslaved. Gutierrez is a family historian from Davenport, Iowa, whose work has focused on discovering and sharing her family's story.

The program will be moderated by journalist Valorie Lawson, evening news co-anchor for WSFA-12 in Montgomery. Lawson has been recognized by the National Association of Black Journalists for her stories on Alabama's Blackbelt and the Civil Rights Foot Soldiers.

A Q&A will follow the program. Admission is free. For more information about this program, call or (334) 353-4689 or email alex.colvin@archives.alabama.gov.

The Alabama Department of Archives and History is the state's government records repository, special collections library and research facility, and is home to the Museum of Alabama, the state history museum. It is located in downtown Montgomery, directly across Washington Avenue from the State Capitol. The Archives and Museum are open Monday through Saturday, 8:30 to 4:30. The EBSCO Research Room is open Tuesday through Friday and the second Saturday of the month from 8:30 to 4:30. To learn more, visit www.archives.alabama.gov or call (334) 242-4364.

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